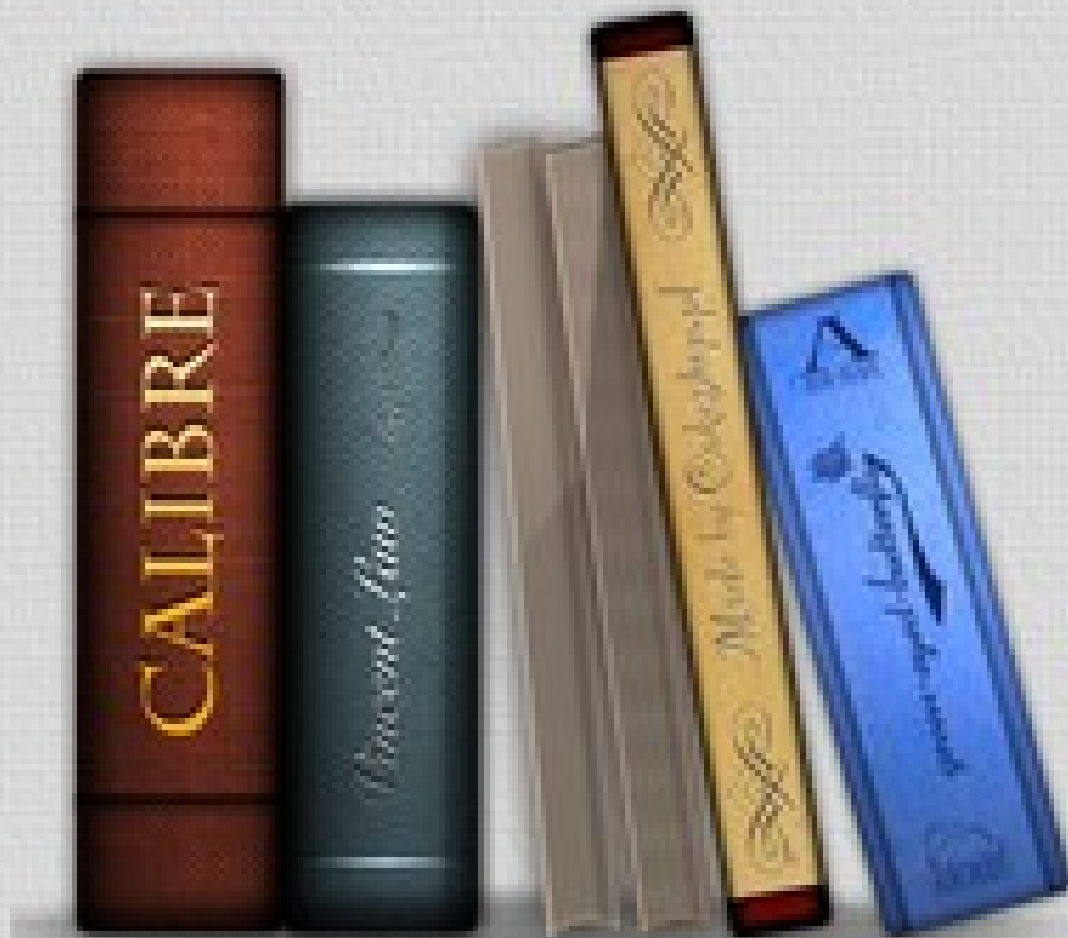


DGuzik 36 Zephaniah

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(Zep 1:1)

Introduction

This is the prophetic message that the LORD gave to¹ Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah.

Zephaniah delivered this message during the reign of² King Josiah son of Amon of Judah: (Guzik)

Zep 1:1-18

ZEPHANIAH 1 - COMING JUDGMENT AND THE REASONS FOR IT

A. God's promised judgment.

1. (Zep_1:1) Zephaniah: The man and his times.

The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

a. **The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah:**

This first verse of the prophecy of Zephaniah sets it apart from most other prophets, in that he tells us both his time and his roots. Zephaniah was an unusual prophet, in that he was of royal lineage, descending from the godly King **Hezekiah**.

i. The name **Zephaniah** means "Yahweh Hides" or "Yahweh Has Hidden." Zephaniah was almost certainly born during the long, wicked reign of Manasseh, whose reign began 55 years before the start of Josiah's reign. Zephaniah was probably hidden for his own protection.

b. **In the days of Josiah:** Josiah was a godly, young king who brought great revival and reform to Judah but Josiah reigned for 10 years before he led his great revival.

Zephaniah was likely written in the years before the revival, and God used this prophecy to bring and further revival.

i. Since Zephaniah predicts the destruction of Nineveh (which happened in 612 B.C.) we know that his prophecy belongs to the first part of the reign of King Josiah.

ii. The 12 Minor Prophets are divided into two groups: pre-exilic and post-exilic. The first 9 are *pre-exilic*, writing before the Babylonians conquered and exiled Judah. The last 3 are *post-exilic*, writing during and after the return of Israel from Babylon to the Promised Land. Zephaniah is the last of the pre-exilic prophets, and can be said to “sum up” the messages of the previous 8. This is why Zephaniah seems unoriginal to some scholars, because he quotes the words and ideas of many previous prophets.

2. (Zep_1:2-3) The promise of judgment.

“I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land,” says the LORD; “I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea, and the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land,” says the LORD.

a. **I will utterly consume everything:** Zephaniah doesn’t waste any time getting to the point. Delivering the message of the LORD, he warns of harsh and complete judgment that consumes everything before the LORD.

3. (Zep_1:4-6) Judgment is promised to idolaters.

“I will stretch out My hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, the names of the idolatrous priests with the *pagan* priests; those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; those who worship and swear *oaths* by the LORD, but who *also* swear by Milcom; those who have turned back from *following* the LORD, and have not sought the LORD, nor inquired of Him.”

a. **Against Judah:** The promise of judgment in Zep_1:2-3 was broad enough to include the whole earth, and to allow some to think that God didn’t really mean *them*. Now God

zeros in on His people in the land of **Judah**, and He will not allow them to think that He speaks just to others.

b. **I will cut off every trace of Baal**: King Josiah inherited a corrupt nation from his father Amon and grandfather Manasseh, a nation almost wholly given over to idolatry (2Ki_21:3-7). Here God announces judgment against the idol worshippers in Israel. Apparently both the leadership and the people heeded this announcement of judgment, because in the days of Josiah this kind of gross idolatry was put away (2Ki_23:4-15).

i. In light of the complete uprooting of idolatry described in 2 Kings 23, we can see that God's promise to **cut off every trace of Baal** and destroy the rest of the expressions of idolatry was fulfilled. We also see that this prophecy was an invitation, as if God said: "Baal and the idols are going to go. You can get rid of them in righteousness or I will get rid of them in judgment, but rest assured that they are going to go." King Josiah directed the war on idolatry and the nation was blessed.

4. (Zep_1:7-9) Judgment is promised to royalty.

"Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand, for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests. And it shall be, in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel. In the same day I will punish all those who leap over the threshold, who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit."

a. **Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD**: God addresses the royalty of Judah in a way they aren't used to hearing. He tells them to "shut up" and listen to His pronouncement of judgment - a **sacrifice** of judgment made against a wicked nation.

i. Boice tells the story of two gangsters, one named "Two-Gun Crowley" who cruelly murdered many including a policeman. He was captured in a shoot-out with police and

wrote this note during the shoot-out, fearing he would die: "Under my coat is a weary heart, but a kind one - one that would do nobody any harm." The other gangster is Al Capone, who said: "I have spent the best years of my life giving people the lighter pleasures, and all I get is abuse, the existence of a hunted man." Our ability to proclaim our innocence when we are deep in sin is pretty amazing, but through it all God tells us **be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD.**

b. **I will punish the princes and the king's children:**

This warning came to a *godly* king during a time of reform.

God warns Josiah and the whole royal community what will happen if they don't follow through on their turning to God.

c. **All such as are clothed with foreign apparel:** The priests and leaders of Judah were ashamed of their national identity, so they loved to dress in **foreign apparel**. They wanted to be as much like the worldly nations around them as they could possibly be.

d. **All those who leap over the threshold:** This probably refers to bringing pagan customs and superstitions into the house of God, in the same way that the worshippers of Dagon honored silly and offensive superstitions (1Sa_5:5).

5. (Zep_1:10-11) Judgment is promised to merchants.

"And there shall be on that day," says the LORD, "The sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate, a wailing from the Second Quarter, and a loud crashing from the hills. Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh! For all the merchant people are cut down; all those who handle money are cut off."

a. **All the merchant people are cut down:** Merchants and those with money trusted in their riches, and now God promises to cut down those steeped in that kind of idolatry. Col_3:5-6 shows this isn't just an Old Testament concept: *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth . . . covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.*

6. (Zep_1:12-13) Judgment is promised to the complacent.

“And it shall come to pass at that time *that* I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, ‘The LORD will not do good, nor will He do evil.’ Therefore their goods shall become booty, and their houses a desolation; they shall build houses, but not inhabit *them*; they shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine.”

a. **I will search Jerusalem with lamps:** No one will be able to hide against the judgment of God. It is coming, and even if God must get out the “flashlights,” He will find them.

i. “Unlike Diogenes, the pre-Christian Greek philosopher who was searching for an honest man, Yahweh in this context does not seek righteousness but sin to *punish* and eradicate.” (Baker) b. **Punish the men who are settled in complacency:** The LORD promises judgment against those who feel that God is distant or detached from their lives, and have thus become complacent.

c. **The LORD will not do good, nor will He do evil:** Some people believe in God as a great “clockmaker” who created the universe, wound it up and then left it ticking without any intervention from Him. Those who believe there is no God, or if He is He has nothing to do with man are terribly and tragically wrong.

i. Edward Gibbon in his book *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* described the attitude towards religion in the last days of the Roman Empire - attitudes remarkably like our own today.

- The people regarded all religions as equally true
- The philosophers regarded all religions as equally false
- The politicians regarded all religions as equally useful

B. The description of judgment.

1. (Zep_1:14-16) The intensity of judgment.

The great day of the LORD *is* near; *it is* near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. That day *is* a day of wrath, a day

of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers.

a. **The great day of the LORD is near:** The term **day of the LORD** (used more than 25 times in the Bible) does not necessarily refer to one specific day; it speaks of "God's time." The idea is that now is the *day of man*, but the day of man will not last forever. One day, the Messiah will end the day of man and bring forth the **day of the LORD**.

b. **That day is a day of wrath:** It is a **day of wrath** because man will not give up without a fight, and because mankind will receive the just penalty for his rebellion against the LORD. Zephaniah paints the picture powerfully with the repeated description, "**a day of . . .** "

i. **That day is a day of wrath:** "This passage is the Vulgate forms the first line of the medieval sequence *Dies irae*." (Walker) 2. (Zep_1:17-18) The certainty of judgment.

"I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse." Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land.

a. **I will . . . I shall:** God wants to make it plain and certain that He will judge a rebellious Judah. If they do not repent, there will be no holding back from the completion of His judgment.

b. **Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them:** Men trust in **silver** and **gold**, but it will do them no good on the day of God's deliverance.

(Zep 1:2) ***The Lord's Day of Judgment is Approaching***

"I will destroy³ everything from the face of the earth," says the LORD.

(Zep 1:3) "I will destroy people and animals;

I will destroy the birds in the sky

and the fish in the sea.

(The idolatrous images of these creatures will be destroyed along with evil people.)⁴

I will remove⁵ humanity from the face of the earth," says the LORD.

(Zep 1:4) "I will attack⁶ Judah

and all who live in Jerusalem.⁷

I will remove⁸ from this place every trace of Baal worship,⁹

as well as the very memory¹⁰ of the pagan priests.¹¹

(Zep 1:5) I will remove¹² those who worship the stars in the sky from their rooftops,¹³

those who swear allegiance to the LORD¹⁴ while taking oaths in the name of¹⁵ their 'king,'¹⁶

(Zep 1:6) and those who turn their backs on¹⁷ the LORD

and do not want the LORD's help or guidance."¹⁸

(Zep 1:7) Be silent before the Lord GOD,¹⁹

for the LORD's day of judgment²⁰ is almost here.²¹

The LORD has prepared a sacrificial meal;²²

he has ritually purified²³ his guests.

(Zep 1:8) "On the day of the LORD's sacrificial meal,

I will punish the princes²⁴ and the king's sons,

and all who wear foreign styles of clothing.²⁵

(Zep 1:9) On that day I will punish all who leap over the threshold,²⁶

who fill the house of their master²⁷ with wealth taken by violence and deceit.²⁸

(Zep 1:10) On that day," says the LORD,

"a loud cry will go up²⁹ from the Fish Gate,³⁰

wailing from the city's newer district,³¹

and a loud crash³² from the hills.

(Zep 1:11) Wail, you who live in the market district,³³

for all the merchants³⁴ will disappear³⁵

and those who count money³⁶ will be removed.³⁷

(Zep 1:12) At that time I will search through Jerusalem with lamps.

I will punish the people who are entrenched in their sin,³⁸

those who think to themselves,³⁹

'The LORD neither rewards nor punishes.'⁴⁰

(Zep 1:13) Their wealth will be stolen

and their houses ruined!

They will not live in the houses they have built,

nor will they drink the wine from the vineyards they have planted.

(Zep 1:14) The LORD's great day of judgment⁴¹ is almost here;

it is approaching very rapidly!

There will be a bitter sound on the LORD's day of judgment;

at that time warriors will cry out in battle.⁴²

(Zep 1:15) That day will be a day of God's anger,⁴³

a day of distress and hardship,

a day of devastation and ruin,

a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and dark skies,

(Zep 1:16) a day of trumpet blasts⁴⁴ and battle cries.⁴⁵

Judgment will fall on⁴⁶ the fortified cities and the high corner towers.

(Zep 1:17) I will bring distress on the people⁴⁷

and they will stumble⁴⁸ like blind men,

for they have sinned against the LORD.

Their blood will be poured out like dirt;

their flesh⁴⁹ will be scattered⁵⁰ like manure.

(Zep 1:18) Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them

in the day of the LORD's angry judgment.

The whole earth⁵¹ will be consumed by his fiery wrath.⁵²

Indeed,⁵³ he will bring terrifying destruction⁵⁴ on all who live on the earth."⁵⁵

(Zep 2:1) ***The Prophet Warns the People***

Bunch yourselves together like straw,¹ you undesirable² nation,

(Guzik)

Zep 2:1-15

ZEPHANIAH 2 - JUDGMENT AGAINST THE NATIONS

A. The last chance.

1. (Zep_2:1-2) Repent while there is still time.

Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, before the decree is issued, *or* the day passes like chaff, before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you!

a. **Gather yourselves together:** The idea is gathering together in a solemn demonstration of national mourning and repentance.

b. **Before the decree is issued:** All the announcement of judgment in the previous chapter is understood as a warning and as an invitation to repentance. The often-unwritten theme behind most every prophecy of judgment is, "This is

what will happen if you *do not repent*." Here the prophet pleads with the nation to repent **before** it is too late.

c. **Before the day passes like chaff**: Here the prophet calls for a sense of *urgency* in repentance. Each day **passes like chaff**, and there is nothing to show for the day if we neglect what is most important: getting right and staying right with God.

i. How easy it is to let the days pass **like chaff**, and never get right with God! Often the devil's most powerful lie isn't that there is no God, or no Bible, or no truth - often his most powerful lie is that *there is no hurry*.

Nevertheless, *today is the day of salvation*.

2. (Zep_2:3) The last chance.

Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger.

a. **Seek the LORD, all you meek**: Even the righteous must take heed to this warning. It would do them no good to say, "The LORD speaks to my wicked neighbor and not to me." At a critical moment of national danger, even the righteous must **seek the LORD**.

b. **It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger**: In more than one place, God promises to *hide* His righteous in the day of great judgment. This is especially relevant to the time of the Great Tribulation, when Jesus warned us to *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man*.

(Luk_21:36) B. Judgment against the nations.

1. (Zep_2:4-7) Judgment against the Philistines.

For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon desolate; they shall drive out Ashdod at noonday, and Ekron shall be uprooted. Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD *is* against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines: "I will destroy you; so there shall be no inhabitant." The seacoast shall be pastures, with

shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks. The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed *their* flocks there; in the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening. For the LORD their God will intervene for them, and return their captives.

a. **For Gaza shall be forsaken:** Judgment will come against an unrepentant Judah, but it will also come against the pagan nations neighboring Judah. God promises to destroy the cities of the Philistines and give their land as pasture **for the remnant of the house of Judah.**

b. The name **Cherethites** is “a reference to their early geographical links with Crete.” (Baker) 2. (Zep_2:8-11) Judgment against the Moabites and Ammonites.

“I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the people of Ammon, with which they have reproached My people, and made arrogant threats against their borders. Therefore, as I live,” says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, and the people of Ammon like Gomorrah; overrun with weeds and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, and the remnant of My people shall possess them.” This they shall have for their pride, because they have reproached and made arrogant threats against the people of the LORD of hosts. The LORD *will be* awesome to them, for He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth; *people* shall worship Him, each one from his place, indeed all the shores of the nations.

a. **I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the insults of the people of Ammon:** First God looked to the west and saw the Philistines; now He looks to the east and sees the Moabites and the Ammonites. God promises to judge these peoples and bring them to **perpetual desolation.**

i. “The comparison of Moab and Ammon to Sodom and Gomorrah is not surprising in view of their origin: Moab and Ammon were the offspring of the incestuous relations of

Lot's daughters with their drunk father after he fled the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah." (Walker)

b. **The LORD will be awesome to them, for He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth; people shall worship Him:** God will glorify Himself among the nations, and one way He will do it is to bring the idols of the nations low. All will see that their idols are vain and that the LORD alone is God.

3. (Zep_2:12) Judgment against Ethiopia.

"You Ethiopians also, you shall be slain by My sword."

a. **You Ethiopians also:** Now God looks to the south, announcing judgment against the **Ethiopians**.

4. (Zep_2:13-15) Judgment against Assyria.

And He will stretch out His hand against the north, destroy Assyria, and make Nineveh a desolation, as dry as the wilderness. The herds shall lie down in her midst, every beast of the nation. Both the pelican and the bittern shall lodge on the capitals *of* her *pillars*; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation *shall be* at the threshold; for He will lay bare the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt securely, that said in her heart, "*I am it, and there is none besides me.*" How has she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down! Everyone who passes by her shall hiss and shake his fist.

a. **And He will stretch out His hand against the north:** God completes the circle of judgment against Israel's neighbors by looking at **Assyria** and her capital city of **Nineveh**, which will be made a desolate city fit only for the habitation of animals and birds.

b. **This is the rejoicing city that dwelt securely:** Nineveh felt strong and confident, but God knew how to bring her low. Here the Lord fulfills the principle of Jam_4:6 : *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

c. Zephaniah never mentions *why* the nations are ripe for judgment. Perhaps he assumes we've already read Amos

and Isaiah and Nahum, which do detail the sins of these neighboring nations.

(Zep 2:2) before God's decree becomes reality³ and the day of opportunity disappears like windblown chaff,⁴

before the LORD's raging anger⁵ overtakes⁶ you —

before the day of the LORD's angry judgment overtakes you!
(Zep 2:3) Seek the LORD's favor,⁷ all you humble people⁸ of the land who have obeyed his commands!⁹

Strive to do what is right!¹⁰ Strive to be humble!¹¹

Maybe you will be protected¹² on the day of the LORD's angry judgment.

(Zep 2:4) ***Judgment on Surrounding Nations***

Indeed,¹³ Gaza will be deserted¹⁴

and Ashkelon will become a heap of ruins.¹⁵

Invaders will drive away the people of Ashdod by noon,¹⁶

and Ekron will be overthrown.¹⁷

(Zep 2:5) Those who live by the sea, the people who came from Crete,¹⁸ are as good as dead.¹⁹

The LORD has decreed your downfall,²⁰ Canaan, land of the Philistines:

"I will destroy everyone who lives there!"²¹

(Zep 2:6) The seacoast²² will be used as pasture lands²³ by the shepherds

and as pens for their flocks.

(Zep 2:7) Those who are left from the kingdom of Judah²⁴ will take possession of it.²⁵

By the sea²⁶ they²⁷ will graze,

in the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down in the evening,

for the LORD their God will intervene for them²⁸ and restore their prosperity.²⁹

(Zep 2:8) "I have heard Moab's taunts

and the Ammonites' insults.

They³⁰ taunted my people

and verbally harassed those living in Judah.³¹

(Zep 2:9) Therefore, as surely as I live," says the LORD who commands armies, the God of Israel, "be certain that Moab will become like Sodom

and the Ammonites like Gomorrah.

They will be overrun by weeds,³²

filled with salt pits,³³

and permanently desolate.

Those of my people who are left³⁴ will plunder their belongings;³⁵

those who are left in Judah³⁶ will take possession of their land."

(Zep 2:10) This is how they will be repaid for their arrogance,³⁷

for they taunted and verbally harassed³⁸ the people of the LORD who commands armies.

(Zep 2:11) The LORD will terrify them,³⁹

for⁴⁰ he will weaken⁴¹ all the gods of the earth.

All the distant nations will worship the LORD in their own lands.⁴²

(Zep 2:12) "You⁴³ Ethiopians⁴⁴ will also die by my sword!"⁴⁵

(Zep 2:13) The LORD⁴⁶ will attack the north⁴⁷

and destroy Assyria.

He will make Nineveh a heap of ruins;

it will be as barren⁴⁸ as the desert.

(Zep 2:14) Flocks and herds⁴⁹ will lie down in the middle of it,

as well as every kind of wild animal.⁵⁰

Owls⁵¹ will sleep in the tops of its support pillars;

they will hoot through the windows.⁵²

Rubble will cover the thresholds;⁵³

even the cedar work⁵⁴ will be exposed to the elements.⁵⁵

(Zep 2:15) This is how the once-proud city will end up⁵⁶ —

the city that was so secure.⁵⁷

She thought to herself,⁵⁸ "I am unique! No one can compare to me!"⁵⁹

What a heap of ruins she has become, a place where wild animals live!

Everyone who passes by her taunts her⁶⁰ and shakes his fist.⁶¹

(Zep 3:1) ***Jerusalem is Corrupt***

The filthy,¹ stained city is as good as dead;

the city filled with oppressors is finished!²

(Guzik)

Zep 3:1-20

ZEPHANIAH 3 - THE LORD REJOICES OVER THE RESTORATION OF HIS PEOPLE

A. A contrast between a wicked city and a righteous God.

1. (Zep_3:1-4) Jerusalem, the wicked city.

Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted, to the oppressing city! She has not obeyed *His* voice, she has not received correction; she has not trusted in the LORD, she has not drawn near to her God. Her princes in her midst *are* roaring lions; her judges *are* evening wolves that leave not a bone till morning. Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people; her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.

a. **Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted, to the oppressing city!** From the way that Zephaniah 2 ended we perhaps hoped that this **oppressing city** was Nineveh. From the references to **her prophets, her priests**, and the **sanctuary** and the **law**, we know *Jerusalem* is the **oppressing city**.

b. **She has not . . . she has not . . . she has not . . . she has not:** In repeating these four phrases, the prophet tells us the root of Jerusalem's sin.

i. **She has not obeyed His voice:** God called to His people, but they did not listen. If there is any voice for the sheep to obey, it is the voice of the shepherd - but **she has not obeyed His voice.**

ii. **She has not received correction:** Correction certainly came, but she did not *receive* it as correction from the LORD. Instead it was a bad time, tough circumstances, whatever - but **she has not received correction.**

iii. **She has not trusted in the LORD:** God never gave her a reason to stop trusting in Him; He never proved Himself unfaithful or untrustworthy. Now God's people will openly deny and contradict God's word and promises, showing that **she has not trusted in the LORD.**

iv. **She has not drawn near to her God:** The worst offence is saved for last. God longs for relationship with His people, but they rejected His desire and went their own way, so **she has not drawn near to her God.**

2. (Zep_3:5-7) The righteous God.

The LORD *is* righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, but the unjust knows no shame. "I have cut off nations, their fortresses are devastated; I have made their streets desolate, with none passing by. Their cities are destroyed; *there is* no one, no inhabitant. I said, 'Surely you will fear Me, you will receive instruction'; so that her dwelling would not be cut off, *despite* everything for which I punished her. But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds."

a. **The LORD is righteous in her midst:** This makes the unrighteousness of His people even more criminal and tragic.

God has been nothing but **righteous** to them, yet they respond with sin. Eventually they put themselves on the

wrong side of God's righteousness and face His **justice**.

b. **Surely you will fear Me, you will receive instruction . . . But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds:**

God brought His justice to the nations around Judah, and it should have warned Judah what would happen if they rejected God. Instead of learning from the surrounding nations, they dedicated themselves to ungodliness all the more.

B. The promise of restoration.

1. (Zep_3:8-13) Judgment and restoration.

"Therefore wait for Me," says the LORD, "Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination *is* to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering. In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgress against Me; for then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD. The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness and speak no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed *their* flocks and lie down, and no one shall make *them* afraid."

a. **Pour on them My indignation . . . then I will restore:** In light of the repeated and chronic sin of the nations and of God's own people, God will bring judgment - and then *restoration*.

b. **That they all may call on the name of the LORD:** In this ultimate restoration, God will give the world a common language again (**a pure language**), and the entire world will worship the LORD, not only Israel.

i. Most Bible scholars see this as fulfilled in the days of the Millennium, when Jesus reigns for 1,000 years over this earth after His return in power and glory. From this passage many scholars believe that in that day the world will go back to a common language - perhaps Hebrew.

c. **To serve Him with one accord:** Literally, this is *with one shoulder*. The idea is that the shoulders are working together as one to bear the load of the work.

d. **You shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain:** In the millennial earth Israel will be the world's superpower, but she will not be proud or **haughty**. Under the leadership of the Lord Jesus and His redeemed, she will know that her standing is all of grace.

e. **For they shall feed their flocks and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid:** This speaks of the peace and prosperity Israel will know in the millennial earth.

2. (Zep_3:14-20) Restored with singing.

Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all *your* heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the LORD, *is* in your midst; you shall see disaster no more.

In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet *you* with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." "I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly, who are among you, *to whom* its reproach *is* a burden.

Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the lame, and gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame in every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will bring you back, even at the time I gather you; for I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I return your captives before your eyes," says the LORD.

a. **Sing, O daughter of Zion!** In light of the glorious promise of restoration, Israel should sing and shout with joy. God will save and redeem them from both their enemies and their iniquities.

b. **The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save:** This passage gives us definite steps for consolation, as we understand that:

- The LORD is in your midst
- The LORD is in your midst with power to save
- God takes joy in you
- God gives you rest in His love
- God sings over you

c. **He will rejoice over you with gladness:** We often underestimate the joy God has in His people, and too often think God is annoyed or irritated with us. "Faulty as the church is, the Lord rejoices in her. While we mourn, as well we may, yet we do not sorrow as those that are without hope; for God does not sorrow, his heart is glad, and he is said to rejoice with joy - a highly emphatic expression." (Spurgeon) d. **He will rejoice over you with singing:** We don't often think of God singing, but He does - and He sings **over** His people. This is how much joy and delight we give to the LORD - that He breaks into song!

i. "Think of the great Jehovah singing! Can you imagine it? Is it possible to conceive of the Deity breaking into a song: Father, Son and Holy Ghost together singing over the redeemed? God is so happy in the love which he bears to his people that he breaks the eternal silence, and sun and moon and stars with astonishment hear God chanting a hymn of joy." (Spurgeon)

ii. "If God sings, shall not we sing? He did not sing when he made the world. No; he looked upon it, and simply said that it was good. The angels sang, the sons of God shouted for joy: creation was very wonderful to them, but it was not much to God, who could have made thousands of worlds by his mere will. Creation could not make him sing . . .

When all was done, and the Lord saw what became of it in the salvation of his redeemed, then he rejoiced after a divine manner.” (Spurgeon)

e. **Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak:** Knowing this is the tender love and care of God for us should make us respond two ways. First, we **do not fear** - if **the Mighty One** loves us and delights in us this way, what can we be afraid of? Second, we **let not your hands be weak** - knowing this mighty Lord of Love is for us, we want to be for *Him* with all of our energy. We will not become weak or weary in our service for Him.

i. “‘Fear thou not.’ What! Not a little? No, ‘Fear thou not.’ But surely I may show some measure of trembling? No, ‘Fear thou not.’ Tie that knot tight about the throat of unbelief. ‘Fear thou not’: neither this day, nor any day of thy life. When fear comes in, drive it away; give it no space. If God rests in his love, and if God sings, what canst thou have to do with fear?” (Spurgeon) f. **I will gather . . . I will save:** God promises to encourage the discouraged, to defeat our enemies, to heal the lame, and to gather the scattered. All this is for His **praise and fame** and for ours, because we are found in Him (**I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples**).

(Zep 3:2) She is disobedient;³

she refuses correction.⁴

She does not trust the LORD;

she does not seek the advice of⁵ her God.

(Zep 3:3) Her princes⁶ are as fierce as roaring lions;⁷

her rulers⁸ are as hungry as wolves in the desert,⁹

who completely devour their prey by morning.¹⁰
(Zep 3:4) Her prophets are proud;¹¹

they are deceitful men.

Her priests defile what is holy;¹²

they break God's laws.¹³
(Zep 3:5) The just LORD resides¹⁴ within her;

he commits no unjust acts.¹⁵

Every morning he reveals¹⁶ his justice.

At dawn he appears without fail.¹⁷

Yet the unjust know no shame.
(Zep 3:6) ***The Lord's Judgment will Purify***

"I destroyed¹⁸ nations;

their walled cities¹⁹ are in ruins.

I turned their streets into ruins;

no one passes through them.

Their cities are desolate;²⁰

no one lives there.²¹
(Zep 3:7) I thought,²² 'Certainly you will respect²³ me!

Now you will accept correction!'

If she had done so, her home²⁴ would not be destroyed²⁵
by all the punishments I have threatened.²⁶

But they eagerly sinned

in everything they did.²⁷

(Zep 3:8) Therefore you must wait patiently²⁸ for me," says
the LORD,

"for the day when I attack and take plunder.²⁹

I have decided³⁰ to gather nations together
and assemble kingdoms,

so I can pour out my fury on them —

all my raging anger.

For³¹ the whole earth will be consumed

by my fiery anger.

(Zep 3:9) Know for sure that I will then enable

the nations to give me acceptable praise.³²

All of them will invoke the LORD's name when they pray,³³

and will worship him in unison.³⁴
(Zep 3:10) From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,³⁵

those who pray to me³⁶ will bring me tribute.
(Zep 3:11) In that day you³⁷ will not be ashamed of all your
rebelliousness against me,³⁸

for then I will remove from your midst those who proudly
boast,³⁹

and you will never again be arrogant on my holy hill.
(Zep 3:12) I will leave in your midst a humble and meek
group of people,⁴⁰

and they will find safety in the LORD's presence.⁴¹
(Zep 3:13) The Israelites who remain⁴² will not act
deceitfully.

They will not lie,

and a deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouth.

Indeed, they will graze peacefully like sheep⁴³ and lie
down;

no one will terrify them."
(Zep 3:14) Shout for joy, Daughter Zion!⁴⁴

Shout out, Israel!

Be happy and boast with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem!

(Zep 3:15) The LORD has removed the judgment against you;⁴⁵

he has turned back your enemy.

Israel's king, the LORD, is in your midst!

You no longer need to fear disaster.

(Zep 3:16) On that day they will say⁴⁶ to Jerusalem,

"Don't be afraid, Zion!

Your hands must not be paralyzed from panic!⁴⁷

(Zep 3:17) The LORD your God is in your midst;

he is a warrior who can deliver.

He takes great delight in you;⁴⁸

he renews you by his love;⁴⁹

he shouts for joy over you."⁵⁰

(Zep 3:18) "As for those who grieve because they cannot attend the festivals —

I took them away from you;

they became tribute and were a source of shame to you.⁵¹

(Zep 3:19) Look, at that time I will deal with those who mistreated you.

I will rescue the lame sheep⁵²

and gather together the scattered sheep.

I will take away their humiliation

and make the whole earth admire and respect them.⁵³
(Zep 3:20) At that time I will lead you —

at the time I gather you together.⁵⁴

Be sure of this!⁵⁵ I will make all the nations of the earth
respect and admire you⁵⁶

when you see me restore you,"⁵⁷ says the LORD.